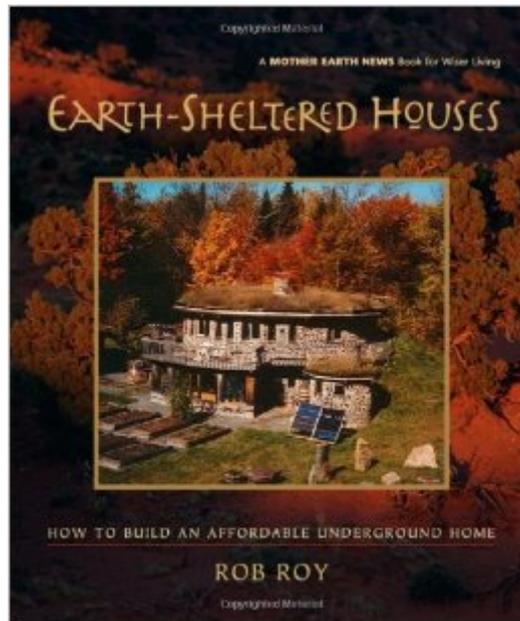


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Earth-Sheltered Houses: How To Build An Affordable... (Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series)



Synopsis

An earth-sheltered, earth-roofed home has the least impact upon the land of all housing styles, leaving almost zero footprint on the planet. *Earth-Sheltered Houses* is a practical guide for those who want to build their own underground home at moderate cost. It describes the benefits of sheltering a home with earth, including the added comfort and energy efficiency from the moderating influence of the earth on the home's temperature (keeping it warm in the winter and cool in the summer), along with the benefits of low maintenance and the protection against fire, sound, earthquake, and storm afforded by the earth. Extra benefits from adding an earth or other living roof option include greater longevity of the roof substrate, fine aesthetics, and environmental harmony. The book covers all of the various construction techniques involved, including details on planning, excavation, footings, floor, walls, framing, roofing, waterproofing, insulation, and drainage. Specific methods appropriate for the inexperienced owner/builder are a particular focus and include: Pouring one's own footings and/or floor The use of dry-stacked (surface-bonded) concrete block walls Post-and-beam framing Plank-and-beam roofing Drainage methods and self-adhesive waterproofing membranes The time-tested, easy-to-learn construction techniques described in *Earth-Sheltered Houses* will enable readers to embark upon their own building projects with confidence, backed up by a comprehensive resources section that lists all the latest products such as waterproofing membranes, types of rigid insulation, and drainage products that will protect the building against water damage and heat loss. Rob Roy is a former contractor with 27 years of experience and 12 previous books to his credit, including *Cordwood Building* and *Timber Framing for the Rest of Us*. An expert on underground building, he founded the Earthwood Building School in 1981 with his wife, Jaki, and is frequently a speaker at events throughout North America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I went to some trouble to survey books centered on both underground or into rock dwellings, and also earth sheltered homes, and this book is the best I could find. It has proven to be everything I had hoped for. This book deals with earth-sheltered homes, which are homes generally built on the ground, and then covered with natural dirt and growth on the roof only, or on the roof and the berms of earth piled against at least two of the sides after the fact of building. This is a really excellent offering. 12 chapters, 4 appendices, and an annotated bibliography. A number of really nice color photographs on eight pages in the middle of the book, many black and white photos as well as really excellent understandable diagrams. Take-aways include the need for extremely careful but not over the top load planning, radon as a factor to take seriously, and ANYONE CAN DO THIS. The book covers waterproofing, insulation, and drainage, to include waste drainage where gravity rather than pumping is strongly recommended. It does not cover electrical and plumbing installation. It covers energy in relation to sunlight and windows and heat retention curtains, but does not include coverage of skylights (except as an energy loss factor), interior lights and other "plumbing. The bottom line in the book is that a solid earth-sheltered house can be built for \$10K to \$20K inclusive of appliances, plumbing and so on, which makes it a lot cheaper and greatly more sustainable than a double-wide trailer home, and better in most respects than your average rambler. With Peak Oil now upon us, the energy saving features of the earth-sheltered home are not to be taken lightly.

This is a great book! If you really wanted to build your own earth-sheltered home you could certainly do it using the information presented here (though a wiser course would be to pick up more sources). Thanks to this book and "The New Ecological Home", building our own home with environmentally conscious materials and possibly earth bermed or sheltered is high on our list of priorities. There is only one complaint I have about many books of this variety. They tend to cover difficulties with things like building code and location very lightly. Building code and location are going to be huge factors in building an earth sheltered structure, especially one made with fewer traditional modern building materials. Difficulties with local regulations or inflexible inspectors/building commissions may prevent you from being able to build in the area you want. This

may drive an individual to build in locations further away from urban centers where they might work. Commuting is no fun; and if you wanted to look at it from an environmental standpoint commuting a greater distance to work, grocery market or schools has just raised your carbon footprint and negated some of the savings your earth sheltered home has created. I would highly recommend that individuals check local code thoroughly and choose a location suitable to their daily needs such as work or other social necessities before building. One need not build out of logs and plaster to have an earth sheltered home, though I understand that the point of this book is to have an affordable home and avoiding expensive modern materials. Take a bigger picture of what you are trying to accomplish; if you are purchasing this book it is somewhat safe to assume you are concerned about the environment.

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